

CONTRACT INTERPRETATION

READING THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

TIPS FOR GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Make sure the collective agreement you read pertains to you.

Most BCNU members are under the NBA Collective Agreement, however, some are under independent agreements, healthcare agreements, or public sector contracts.

Employers covered by the collective agreement are always listed within the contract – if in doubt, look for your employer.

Ensure you are reading the most current language.

The cover of the collective agreement always includes the term dates.

Members under the PCA must obtain the new terms of the agreement PLUS the 2012-2014 collective agreement to have ALL the current language.

Utilize the table of contents and index as a guide to look up articles and clauses of interest.

PRO TIP: Reading an electronic version allows you to enter key words into the “Find” option; quickly allowing you to find language relevant to your search.

Review ALL relevant language on the topic you are looking up.

The collective agreement is meant to be read in its entirety as some clauses impact other clauses – and you will not know this unless you read it all. Note when language mentions other parts of the collective agreement and read up on it.

Read the language carefully; break it down if you have to.

Slowly review each sentence in a clause to ensure you understand its meaning. You may miss or misread if you rush through an article.

PRO TIP: if an article is complex, try reading the last sentence in the paragraph first to understand it on its own. Dissect the article in this manner until you get to the beginning – then review it in order.

Consult your LRO if any questions about your interpretation of the collective agreement.

Use the 6 steps of Contract Interpretation to understand language. Double check new interpretations with your LRO.